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## MARRIAGE TAX PENALTY

(Mr. STEARNS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask a simple question: What has the support of the Republican party and the support of 80 percent of the American people? The answer is very simple, the repeal of the marriage tax penalty.

This ridiculous tax provision forces 25 million couples to pay an average of \$1,400 each in extra taxes every year just because they are married for a working family. This \$1,400 would be used to buy a home computer or used for 3 months of childcare, but instead of using this money for their family, these couples are forced to give it to the government.

Our Nation was founded in part because our Founding Fathers grew tired of unfair and ridiculous taxes. Well, I can think of no more unfair or ridiculous tax than the marriage tax penalty. This penalty must be repealed.

Surely everyone can agree that married couples should not be subject to extra taxes just because they are married. Married Americans deserve to be treated fairly. Let us repeal the marriage tax penalty today.

## MARRIAGE PENALTY

(Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today the House is going to vote to end the marriage penalty. Right now married couples pay more in taxes than two single people living together; that is just not right.

Washington must stop penalizing the cornerstone of the American family. We should encourage marriage, not penalize it. We must restore families and the American dream.

Last year, President Clinton labeled the marriage penalty relief risky and even vetoed it. This year Democrats are encouraging him to veto it again. In my district alone, this bill will help end the marriage penalty for over 150,000 Americans. The President and his Democrat friends should stop playing election-year politics.

I say to the President, why do you not help us put American families first? Let us do it now.

## STEPS TO PROTECT AND PRESERVE SOCIAL SECURITY

(Mr. KINGSTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, in Savannah, we are blessed. My wife's grandmother, 97-year-old Betty Carswell is still alive and in good health. She is on Social Security and she needs it.

When I was a boy, growing up down the street my good friend Ross Fox's dad died, and when he died, leaving Mrs. Fox with two young boys to take care of, Social Security was there to protect them. Yet today Social Security is in trouble.

By the year 2030, it will be out of money. There are six positive steps we can take, however, to protect and preserve Social Security. Number one is to have some principles, to say that the benefits for current retirees and near retirees will not be increased; number two, to lock away the Social Security surplus so that the money will not be spent on roads and bridges but used only for Social Security; number three, taxes for Social Security should not be increased; number four, the government should not invest Social Security funds in the stock market; number five, modernization of Social Security should not change the disability and survivors' components for friends like Ross Fox, who lose their loved one, their parents; number six, a portion of the Social Security account should be personalized so that younger people on a voluntary basis would have the option of putting theirs in an interest-bearing account which earns more money than Social Security.

Mr. Speaker, we can do this. We can have a good voluntary program to set up to protect and preserve Social Security. Our seniors need this and our future generations.

## HOPE AND PRAY FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

(Mr. CARDIN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I want to express appreciation to President Clinton for bringing together the prime minister of Israel, Mr. Barak, and Mr. Arafat at Camp David. I know that we all hope and pray for peace in the Middle East. Mr. Barak has shown tremendous courage in putting peace first, in trying to find a way in which we can find true and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that Mr. Arafat and Mr. Barak will understand the historical significance of this meeting and will take advantage of this opportunity so that at least we can look forward to the future of peace in the Middle East.

## OUTRAGEOUSLY HIGH DRUG PRICES

(Mr. GUTKNECHT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about an issue that every senior citizen knows about and, frankly, if we have had town hall meetings, we know about it as well, and that is outrageously high drug prices. My 82-year-old father, for example, takes a

drug called Coumadin. It is a blood thinner. In the United States, the average price for that drug is \$30.25, but the Europeans for the same drug made in the same plant under the same FDA approval pay only \$2.85.

Mr. Speaker, in the information age, we can no longer keep this secret. Americans are paying double, triple and sometimes quadruple the prices that people around the rest of the world are paying for the same drugs, and it would be easy for us to say shame on the pharmaceutical companies. But the truth of the matter is this administration has had 8 years and what have they done about this? Well, they have sent thousands of threatening letters to senior citizens when they tried to import legal drugs into the United States.

Shame on the FDA. Shame on our Justice Department and shame on us. It is time for this Congress to take action to make certain that American senior citizens have access to world market prices for prescription drugs that they need. No senior should have to choose between getting the food they need and the drugs that they need as well.

## STRIKE THE GAG RULE

(Mrs. MALONEY of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, the gag rule has created a policy that increases the number of abortions and it also threatens the lives of many young women.

Last year, this body added in law an international family planning gag rule for other countries that is unconstitutional in America. What happened? Thousands of young women were denied the information they needed to plan or postpone their pregnancies, so thousands of 13-year-old girls, 14-year-old girls and 15-year-old girls got unsafe and often fatal abortions.

These abortions could have been prevented. No U.S. funds are used for abortions. International family planning saves women's lives so we should all support on both sides of the aisle an effort to strike the gag rule.

## PERSONAL LOCKBOX BILL

(Mr. SANFORD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SANFORD. Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to bring to everybody's attention the fact that today I am introducing a bill called the personal lockbox bill. I think it is built on common sense, because one of the things I have consistently heard from folks back home is the very simple idea that the first part of saving Social Security is making sure that Social Security taxes stay with Social Security. That is what this bill does because it takes the Social Security surplus, whatever